

8-1002X

Government Operations Notes:**Panel OKs Bill Limiting Political Appointees**

Legislation that would impose new limits on the number and kind of political appointees in the federal government was approved by the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee June 8.

The panel voted 18-1 in favor of the bill, with Gene Taylor, R-Mo., casting the only dissenting vote.

The bill (HR 2882) would require that Senior Executive Service positions involving personnel management be filled only by career civil servants.

The bill also would clarify limits on which senior positions can be held by political appointees, and it would cap at 1,000 the number of political appointees graded at GS-13 or above. That is approximately the number existing today.

The bill would take effect Jan. 20, 1989, when a new administration comes to power.

HR 2882 also would create a scholarship program for undergraduate and graduate school students in the hope of improving recruitment and training of potential civil service workers.

Under the program, federal agencies could offer scholarships to students based on academic merit. Recipients, who would work at their sponsoring federal agencies during the summer, would receive stipends equal to the base salary of a GS-2-level worker, which currently is about \$11,000. Upon graduation, the recipients would work at those agencies for one year for each year they participated in the fellowship program.

The legislation also would require the Office of Personnel Management to set management-training requirements for supervisors, managers and executives hired to work at federal agencies.

The administration strongly opposes the bill, calling it unnecessary and potentially very costly and arguing that it would "interfere with the responsiveness and efficiency of government management."

Inspector General Act

By voice vote, the House Government Operations Committee June 9

—By Richard Cowan

approved a bill (HR 4054) that would establish inspectors general (IGs) offices in the Justice and Treasury departments and in three federal agencies. (*Weekly Report* p. 1424)

Treasury and Justice are the only Cabinet-level departments that do not already have IGs under the Inspector General Act of 1978. Since that law was passed, IGs have been appointed at 19 federal departments and various agencies to detect and investigate fraud, waste and abuse. (*1978 Almanac* p. 798)

HR 4054 also would establish IGs or similar offices within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Government Printing Office and the U.S. Postal Service.

The Senate Feb. 2 passed a bill (S 908) to establish IG offices at the Treasury Department, FEMA, the Office of Personnel Management and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

By a vote of 8-22, the Government Operations Committee rejected an amendment by Robert S. Walker, R-Pa., that would have expressed the sense of the House that an inspector general be considered for the House of Representatives.

'Computer Matching'

New controls on the federal government's use of computer records on individuals would be imposed by a bill (HR 4699) that was approved by voice vote June 9 by the House Government Operations Committee.

"Computer matching" is a process in which agencies compare computerized records to verify individuals' eligibility for federal benefits or programs.

HR 4699, which is designed to protect the confidentiality of information stored in federal computers, would require agencies to enter into computer-matching agreements that specify the purpose of the comparison and that require separate verification by state and federal agencies of the information obtained from the computer match.

The bill also would give individuals an opportunity to contest eligibility findings based on computer matches.

The Senate passed a similar com-

puter-matching bill (S 496) on May 21, 1987. (*1987 Almanac* p. 371)

Prompt-Pay Amendments

Federal agencies would face new penalties for late payment of bills to private businesses under the provisions of S 328, a bill approved by voice vote June 9 by the House Government Operations Committee.

The bill, which would amend the Prompt Payment Act of 1982, would eliminate the 15-day grace period now enjoyed by federal agencies. It also would require additional penalties on agencies that do not automatically pay interest on late bills.

The committee deleted an amendment previously accepted by its Subcommittee on Government Information, Justice and Agriculture. The amendment would have extended federal prompt-payment regulations to state and local governments that enter into private contracts with federal assistance.

The committee instead endorsed language that would require the 47 states with their own prompt-pay laws to apply those laws when contracting with federal assistance. The bill also would give the three states without prompt-pay laws one year to enact such a statute or else be subject to federal law.

The Senate passed a similar version of S 328 on Oct. 9, 1987. (*1987 Almanac* p. 371)

Consultant Cap

By voice vote June 8, the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee approved a bill (HR 3592) that would place a cap on the rate of pay for consultants hired by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).

Under the bill, the USPS could not pay consultants more than the base pay for GS-18 federal workers, currently \$72,500 per year.

The legislation, introduced by Mickey Leland, D-Texas, was prompted by findings that the USPS had hired an outside consultant in 1986 at a rate of \$900 per day. That consultant ultimately was paid at least \$287,000, according to Leland.

100TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4699

To amend title 5, United States Code, to ensure privacy, integrity, and verification of data disclosed for computer matching, to establish Data Integrity Boards within Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 26, 1988

Mr. ENGLISH introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Government Operations

A BILL

To amend title 5, United States Code, to ensure privacy, integrity, and verification of data disclosed for computer matching, to establish Data Integrity Boards within Federal agencies, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the "Computer Matching and
5 Privacy Protection Act of 1988".

6 **SEC. 2. MATCHING AGREEMENTS.**

7 Section 552a of title 5, United States Code, is
8 amended—

1 vidual under authority granted by the Deficit
2 Reduction Act of 1984;

3 “(v) matches—

4 “(I) using records predominantly
5 relating to Federal personnel, that are
6 performed for routine administrative
7 purposes (subject to guidance provided
8 by the Director of the Office of Manage-
9 ment and Budget pursuant to subsection
10 (v)); or

11 “(II) conducted by an agency using
12 only records from systems of records
13 maintained by that agency;

14 if the purpose of the match is not to take
15 any adverse financial, personnel, disciplinary,
16 or other adverse action against Federal per-
17 sonnel; or

18 “(vi) matches performed to produce
19 background checks for security clearances of
20 Federal personnel or for foreign counterintel-
21 ligence purposes;

22 “(9) the term ‘recipient agency’ means any
23 agency, or contractor thereof, receiving records con-
24 tained in a system of records from a source agency for
25 use in a matching program;